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**Electoral College Strategy**

**Use** [**www.270towin.com**](http://www.270towin.com) **as a resource for this activity**

1. Most campaigns in recent years have focused on the “swing states” (purple states) of Ohio, Florida, Virginia, North Carolina, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Iowa, and Missouri whose results are hard to predict. How many electoral votes do they hold? Would winning all of them deliver victory by itself?

2. The Republican “base” or “red states” are usually said to include most of the states from the south (SC, GA, AL, MS, LA, TX, AR, TN, KY, WV) and the West (IN, AZ, OK, NE, KS, ND, SD, MT, ID, WY, UT, AK). How many total electoral votes are these from the base? Is it alone enough to win the Presidency?

3. How many votes do you get when adding the Republican base to the swing states? Is that enough to win the election?

4. Name the fewest swing states you would need to add to the Republican base to achieve victory. List those states. What would the vote total be, including the total of their “base”?

5. The Democratic “base” or “blue states” are usually said to include most of the states from the northeast (ME, VT, MA, NY, CT, RI, NJ, DE, MD, DC), the west coast (CA, OR, WA, HI), and the “rust belt” Midwest (IL, MN). How many votes are they worth? Can that alone win an election?

6. How many votes do you get if you add the Democratic base to the swing states? Is it enough to win the election?

7. Name the fewest swing states you would need to add to the Democratic base to achieve victory. List those states. What would the vote total be?

8. If a candidate followed an “urban” strategy and focused only on winning the 16 states with the largest cities in the nation (New York (NY), , Los Angeles/San Francisco/San Diego (CA), Chicago (IL), Philadelphia/Pittsburgh (PA), Boston (MA), Houston/Dallas (TX), Phoenix (AZ), Cleveland/Columbus/Cincinnati (OH), Atlanta (GA), Miami/Tampa/Orlando (FL), Seattle (WA), Memphis/Nashville (TN), Denver (CO), Detroit (MI), Baltimore (MD), Washington (DC) and Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN) How many electoral votes would they get if they won all those states? Would it be enough to win an election?

9. If you were in charge of a campaign (you can choose Republican or Democrat), which five states would you make your priority? Explain why you chose those states.

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10. Population patterns are constantly shifting and changing; campaigns have to keep up with the changes to make their campaigns as effective as possible. Let’s re-consider the election of 1824; it was one of the most controversial elections in our history. With four candidates running, none of them got a majority, sending the election to the House of Representatives. The House then chose John Quincy Adams, who was not the leading vote-getter. Add up the electoral votes for each of the four candidates, using the electoral counts we have now and fill in the chart to compare. Who would win the election based on today’s population?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **states**  **Won** | **1824**  **Electoral votes** | **% of 1824 total (261)** | **2016**  **electoral votes** | **% of 2016 total, for the states of 1824 (268)** |
| John Quincy Adams | NY VT NH ME MA RI CT | 84 | 32% |  |  |
| Andrew Jackson | PA NJ MD DE NC SC IL IN TN AL MS LA | 99 | 38% |  |  |
| Henry Clay | OH KY MO | 37 | 14% |  |  |
| William H. Crawford | VA+WV, GA | 41 | 16% |  |  |

**Winner based on 2016 numbers:**